

Estimates Reported in PTEs¹ for Consistency with Prior Years: The vast majority of data provided for this study is provided in units of tons, and all sources are converted to tons during the analysis using the most appropriate and accurate conversion factors available, as detailed in Appendix B. However, to facilitate comparison with earlier reports, final results are converted to passenger tire equivalents (, defined as 20 pounds).

Reasonably Accurate Trend Information: Estimating California waste tire flows is challenging due to data gaps, data quality issues, and conflicting sources of information. Nevertheless, this report provides data that can be used to evaluate trends over time. The authors strive to develop the most complete and accurate estimates for each market segment, while avoiding double counting, and they believe accuracy is generally well within plus or minus 10 percent. The reported volume of used tires is on the higher end of this range as, unlike other segments, it relies more on industry estimates of the typical percentage of tires culled for reuse in the study year (in addition to records of specific shipments made or received, which is the preferred and main information source used in this study). Other segments are based on direct data and reports of volumes, adjusted in detail to maximize completeness while avoiding double counting.

Use of California-Generated Waste Tires, Not Total Market Size: The report estimates the quantity of California-generated waste tires flowing into each market segment and does not include tire-derived material (TDM) or tire-derived products (TDP) entering California from outside the state. Buffings from retread operations are also not included in market estimates. Consequently, the market data presented does not estimate total market size. While not included in the market flow estimates, some findings on retreader buffings and imported TDM and TDP is presented.

The Tire Recycling and Diversion Rates Are Not Adjusted for Residuals or Disposed TDPs: As with other tire market studies, tire diversion and recycling rates are not adjusted for steel and fiber residuals generated by TDM producers. However, in 2015, the vast majority of tire wire and rims were recycled, and most tire fiber was combusted at California cement kilns.

Industry Overview

Figure 1 illustrates waste tire flows and identifies the types of firms involved in California waste tire management. To analyze 2015 waste tire flows, research focused on the following California facilities:

- Fifteen “processors” that received significant quantities of whole waste tires and shipped used tires and/or TDM to a variety of market segments;

¹ PTE stands for passenger tire equivalent, defined by in regulations by CalRecycle (14 CCR § 17225.770) to equal 20 pounds of tire rubber.